

# **NAMB trustees pass significantly reduced budget**

October 8, 2020

ALPHARETTA, Ga.—Trustees of the Southern Baptist Convention’s North American Mission Board passed a \$99.8 million operating budget for 2021—down about 20 percent from the previous year—at their Oct. 5-6 meeting.

Even so, trustees celebrated God’s provision and Southern Baptist faithfulness during a year marked by a pandemic, economic uncertainty and social unrest. Most trustees attended the meeting in person with social distancing at NAMB’s building in Alpharetta, while some participated online.

When the COVID-19 virus sent the United States into a lockdown just as most churches normally would have been collecting the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering, NAMB stopped promoting the offering, NAMB President Kevin Ezell noted.

However, giving continued as churches found creative ways to continue supporting the offering. He called the \$49.3 million given in 2020 “the greatest Annie Armstrong Offering” in history.

“It was not the largest. But it was the greatest,” Ezell said.

“The faithfulness of Southern Baptists is absolutely incredible and to me, never demonstrated better than giving almost \$50 million in the midst of an unpromoted Annie Armstrong offering in the midst of a pandemic,” he said.

Trustees unanimously passed the \$99.8 million operating budget for fiscal year 2021, down from the \$124,230,000 budget originally approved for

2020. Early on in the COVID-19 pandemic, NAMB instituted budgetary freezes and cutbacks designed to keep missionaries on the field.

## **Ezell outlines priorities for 2021**

In his president's report, Ezell outlined three areas of priority focus for NAMB in 2021: collegiate evangelism, Hispanic church planting and Send Relief national mission trips.

Ezell told trustees that with more than 21 million college students in North America and more than 5,300 college campuses, college students are among the top 10 unreached people groups in North America.

He outlined for trustees the projected growth of America's Hispanic population over the next 40 years. In 2016, the Hispanic population in the United States was 57 million. By 2030, it is expected to jump to 74 million and then 111 million by 2060, far outpacing the growth of any other ethnic group.

"We are very excited about putting a good deal of emphasis on our Hispanic church planting, and the reason we are doing it is the demographic projections," Ezell said. "We are trying to get ahead of the growth."

Ezell also presented plans for Send Relief national mission trips that will take place each month in different cities throughout North America beginning in fall 2021.

The goal of the mission events is to bring hundreds of volunteers to a city to focus on meeting needs and sharing Christ in communities, schools and churches. Send Relief will work with state Baptist conventions, local associations and churches to coordinate events.